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# Montana and the Sky

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Department of Transportation - Aeronautics Division

Vol. 46 No. 8

August 1995

## Montana Loses Aviation Comrade

James Anthony Damron, born August 1, 1939, to Lloyd and Lydia (Cossa) Damron in Paris, Texas, passed away at the Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights near Chicago on July 6, 1995.

Jim's life encompassed many facets of aviation. From early in his youth to his final day, Jim pursued excellence and knowledge of aviation. He served his country in Vietnam in 1964 and 1965 as an Army captain flying helicopters. He returned as a highly decorated wartime pilot. In 1967, Jim joined United Airlines as a flight engineer on the DC-6 proceeding to captain, following the footsteps of his father.

In 1987, while on one of his many cross-country adventures, Jim stopped at the Columbus airport to inquire into some maintenance work on his "Baby Ace." Jim found himself among friends immediately, including one who would become to Jim "The Best Mechanic Anywhere," Allen Rickman. Later Jim, Allen, Terry Fatzinger and other friends would together accomplish the memorable "Non-Stop Coast to Coast Flight" that Jim had dreamed of since his youth. Jim said that this area had a very high number of "flyable days." He became avidly involved in supporting his community through the City-County Airport Board, Library Board of Trustees (93-95) and many other projects.

Jim's professional career spanned years of hard work and commitment to excellence. His tireless efforts in safety of commercial aviation carried him to many challenges within the Airline Pilots Association. Jim loved to get in one of his three small airplanes and do what his predecessors did—"soar with the eagles." While at home, Jim enjoyed corresponding with his many friends and colleagues, while becoming an accomplished writer, historian and speaker.

Jim was a familiar face in Montana, participating in many safety expos, fly-ins and other aviation events. A favorite event of his was being a part of the airline career panel at the education program held for students at the annual aviation conference.

Jim is survived by his two daughters, Sandra Jo Damron of Sonora, California, and Maryanne Damron Cappelluti of Arroyo Grande, California; two sons, James Anthony Damron, Jr. of New York City and Gerald

Lloyd Damron of Seattle, Washington, two grandchildren Anthony Joseph and Julianne Lane Cappelluti; two sisters, Dixie Alexander Damron and Candy Damron Barron; one nephew, Adam Barron; and Jim's fiancée, Mary Morris.

A memorial service with full military rites and missing pilot formation flyover were held at the Columbus Airport.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that memorials be made to the Yellowstone Bank in Columbus for the future construction of a Memorial Airport Terminal.

As was said of Jim's mentor, Charles Lindbergh, could also be said of James A. Damron: "he emerges in his journals as a man who lives with grace and courage, whose life has not lacked elements of controversy or misunderstanding, but who has nonetheless fulfilled to a high degree his unusual creative powers." ✈



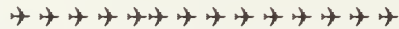
# Administrator's Column

**FAA Changes Medical Standards:** During the Oshkosh EAA Fly-in's *Meet the Boss* session, FAA Administrator David Hinson, told a large audience that the FAA will be publishing a revised rule for pilot medical standards. Hinson stated that he believes the FAA has responded favorably to the many comments received on their previous proposal and we should be pleased with their new rule. He would not give any details because the proposal is currently being processed through all of the required channels before being released. As you know, the aviation industry "rose up in arms" at the ridiculous requirements included in the FAA's first proposal.



**Canadian Customs Clearance:** The Canadian Customs Service will now clear general aviation aircraft which are pre-registered via toll free telephone clearance from the U.S. into Canada. They have designated seven general airports where spot inspections will be conducted. In order to take full advantage of this new service you need to have a CANPAS and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) will provide you with the necessary forms. After you receive your CANPAS you can call Revenue Canada through the toll free number 800-265-6233 for clearance. This service is available during specific airport hours of operations. You can not call earlier than 72 hours or later than one hour for clearance. When you call you will be asked for your CANPAS permit number and other basic entry information. If you do not have a CANPAS you may still be able to get clearance through the toll free number but only if you land during Canadian Customs office hours plus you will be required to make a second call upon landing for permission to leave the customs area. The U.S. Customs Service is considering a similar program for aircraft entering the U.S. from Canada.

**FAA Proposal Makes Sense:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) which will allow pilots to perform "common sense" maintenance task (which really aren't maintenance at all) which currently require a licensed Airframe mechanic sign off. The proposal will only apply to aircraft with nine or fewer seats and operated under Part 135. Under the proposal a pilot will be able to remove and replace cabin-mounted stretchers, seats, cabin-mounted oxygen bottles, self contained panel-mounted radios, self contained flight control systems, self contained transponders, and DME's. More items will likely be added to the list later. It is stipulated that a pilot must be properly trained to perform such tasks. If you have an opinion concerning this proposed rule change you should write in triplicate to the FAA, Office of the Chief Counsel, Attn: Rules Docket (AGC-10), Docket 28273, 800 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20591



**FCC Reduced License Fee:** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has agreed to lower the registration fees for aircraft radio station licenses. The new fee will be \$75 for ten years as compared to \$115 for ten years. A year ago the fee was \$45. In the May 1995 issue of *Montana and the Sky* I wrote about a bill being introduced by Representative Bart Stupak of Michigan (HR 963) which, if passed, will exempt non-commercial aircraft from FCC registration. No one has been able to explain the reason for requiring radio registration of aircraft or boats whether they are private or commercial. Hopefully Rep. Stupak's bill (HR 963) will pass. It is important that you let our Montana congressional delegation know your feelings on this issue.



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# Appreciation Extended

The purpose of this letter is to call attention to a group of folks who have worked tirelessly and, frankly without sufficient recognition to preserve scheduled air transportation to the communities of central and eastern Montana. This group consists of the seven appointed members of the Governor's Montana Essential Air Service Task Force. Their efforts are supported by numerous others, including business leaders in each local community, the administrator and staff of the Montana Aeronautics Division and elected officials.

Scheduled air transportation to isolated rural America is, just as the DOT's name for the program suggested, "essential." Not only do these services meet a host of urgent day-to-day needs of the communities, they provide a sound base for economic development. It is a fact that businesses looking for a new place to "set roots" nearly always ask if the community has reliable scheduled

air service. Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Task Force, these communities can still answer "yes."

But, scheduled air services to the communities should not be taken for granted. The fight to preserve them is on-going and the Task Force is continuing its work.

Please say "thank you" to task force Chairman John Rabenberg and your local task force representatives, as well as the others in your community who have been actively involved in this effort — several over many years. Encourage them to continue their efforts. Lastly, should you want to help out, let them know that too. I am sure they will welcome the assistance.

Big Sky Transco  
dba Big Sky Airlines  
T.D. Marshall  
President & CEO

## More Sonic Booms

By: James R. Greil  
Airport/Airways Bureau

If you live in Western Montana and particularly in the Flathead Valley, you may have noticed within the last month an occasional bone jarring sonic boom echoing throughout the mountains. The origin of these loud booms has been uncovered, much to the relief of regional law enforcement, airports, newspapers and the Aeronautics Division who have steadily been receiving calls inquiring as to what and who are making the booms.

The supersonic shock waves are a result of the U.S. Air Forces recommissioning of a recently retired spy plane. The Lockheed SR-71 is a black, ultra-futuristic looking spy plane which can cruise above 80,000 feet and more than 2,200 mph, (faster than a 30-06 bullet), or three times the speed of sound. The plane, (which can cruise from New York to London in less than an hour), served with the Air Force from 1964 through 1990 and still holds air speed and altitude

records which are confidential. The plane is being recommissioned on a limited basis to defray from the cost of using super sensitive spy satellites to perform intelligence missions. After decommissioning in 1990, NASA took two of the highly secret aircraft and maintained them as high altitude laboratories for collecting data on ozone levels. The Air Force recently awarded a \$30 million dollar contract to take several of the aircraft out of mothballs and begin maintenance and flight testing of the surveillance/reconnaissance aircraft.

The plane is being refurbished at Palmdale, California and then being taken to Edwards Air Force base north of Los Angeles where the aircraft begins its flight towards Montana. Current flight plans have the routine flights departing north to Spokane where the aircraft begins a right turn extending to the Canadian border and then continuing south over Columbia Falls and



## Calendar

- August 3-6—MAAA Fly-in  
Three Forks.
- August 6-19—CAP's National Cadet  
Flight Training Encampment,  
Oshkosh, WI.
- August 11-12—Cheyenne Airport's  
75th Anniversary Celebration.
- August 19-20—Air Show, Lethbridge  
Airport, Alberta.
- August 20—Air Show, Gallatin Field,  
Belgrade.
- September 2-4—Annual Labor Day  
Fly-in, West Yellowstone.
- September 2-4—Miles City Great  
American Cattle Drive Fly-in.
- September 9—EAA Chapter 57  
Fly-in, Laurel. Contact Bob  
Kimpton 259-7010.
- September 15-17—MPA Fall Fly-in,  
Beacon Star.
- September 15-17—Washington  
Pilots Association State  
Convention, Spokane.
- September 24—Beartooth Composite  
Squadron's Cadet Orientation  
Flight, Laurel Airport. Contact 2Lt  
Robert Gilleland at 656-6596.
- October 20—Aeronautics Board  
Meeting, Helena.
- November 26—Beartooth Composite  
Squadron's Cadet Orientation  
Flight, Laurel Airport. Contact 2Lt  
Robert Gilleland at 656-6596.

over the Bob Marshall wilderness. It continues south toward Salt Lake City eventually reaching Kingman, Arizona, where it begins another turn back towards Edwards AFB. A shorter route the aircraft will occasionally fly takes it over central Idaho at its most northerly point. The test flights last approximately 3 hours.

The aircraft is next scheduled to fly over Montana again on Aug. 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, and 30. Testing on the aircraft will continue through the end of the year. If you wish more information on the recommissioning project, you can contact Maj. Richard Williams FAA liaison in Seattle, Staff Sgt. Keith Myhre Edwards AFB Public Affairs, Sec. Lt. Mike Colemal at Malmstrom AFB, or contact the Division.

# Air Race Classic

Sharel Stroh  
Race Stop Chairman

The Air Race Classic stop over in Havre, Montana, was a huge success according to stop chairman Sharel Stroh. Weather problems on the first leg of the race prevented any race planes from arriving at Havre the first day. The second day, June 23, 1995 there were 42 airplanes landing at Havre between 9:30am and 7pm. One airplane over flew and continued on to Gillette, Wy.

There were many local and out of town volunteers to help with the timing, flight plans and maintenance required for the race. Nancy Trudell and Mike Ferguson from Helena and Carson Coryell from Forsyth came the farthest to help. The Montana Air Guard were super in letting the 43 planes through the Hayes MOA. THANKS RUSTLERS! The Great Falls FSS and the Havre Weather Bureau went overboard in handling the weather brief-



Mike Ferguson is pictured with Gretchen Jahn of Eastlake, Colorado and Chris Bentley of Littleton, Colorado. Gretchen and Chris were the first entrants to arrive in Havre in a Bonanza and receive fuel from the Aeronautics Division. They were second to cross the finish line at Huntington, West Virginia.

ings and all the flight plans. For excitement there was a funnel cloud 2 miles south of the Havre Airport around 4pm on Friday. This convinced 9 airplanes to RON in Havre.

ARC 10 was the first Bonanza to land and receive a prize of free fuel from the Montana Aeronautics Division and ARC 37 was the 23rd plane to land and receive

free fuel from Hensley Flying Service.

ARC 17 piloted by Marge Thayer of Mesa, Arizona and Ruby Sheldon of Phoenix, Arizona, flying a Cessna 182 RG won first place at the race finish in Huntington, West Virginia. The Race started in Reno, Nevada.

There are a few race programs available at Hensley Flying Service in Havre.



All 45 planes in the race had to either fly over Havre or land before continuing on the course. Sharel Stroh, Race Stop Chairman, said the reason in getting the race to stopover in Havre was to promote interest in Havre and the surrounding area and in aviation. All these people like to travel and hopefully many will return.



The aircraft timers at Havre had a busy and exciting job as each aircraft entered the area. Aircraft in the race must be of manufacturer's specifications and each is handicapped per miles per hour based on make, model and manufacturer's data and test flights. This gives the smaller, slower airplanes an equal chance of winning the race.

## Search and Rescue Training

Training was conducted at the Thompson Falls Airport for District #1 and Montana Pilots Association Sanders County Hangar volunteers. Jeanne Lesnik and Bob Rutherford, Search Coordinator conducted the session. A potluck picnic was enjoyed by all.

District #5 (Hill and Blaine County) Sharel Stroh, Search Coordinator and District #6 (Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum Counties) Willy Rimby, Search Coordinator will be conducting search and rescue refresher programs in September and October. All volunteers will be getting a flyer with dates, place and time.





# Pavement Maintenance

By: James R. Greil  
Aviation Support Officer

As many of you are already aware, the FAA is requiring from sponsors a *Pavement Preventative Maintenance Program* for any new AIP funded airport projects. Any program a sponsor deems appropriate can be used as long as it meets the following minimum criteria:

## PAVEMENT INVENTORY

The following shall be depicted in an appropriate form and level of detail:

- Location of all runways, taxiways, and aprons
- Dimensions
- Type of Pavement
- Year of construction or most recent major rehabilitation

## INSPECTION SCHEDULE

- Detailed Inspection. A detailed inspection shall be performed at least once a year. If a history of recorded pavement deterioration is available, i.e.; PCI survey as set forth in AC 150/5380-6, guidelines and procedures for maintenance of airport pavements, the frequency of inspections may be extended to three years.
- Drive-By Inspection. A drive-by inspection shall be performed at least once per month to detect unexpected changes in the pavement condition.

## RECORDKEEPING

Complete information on the findings of all detailed inspections and on the maintenance performed shall be recorded and kept on file for a minimum of five years. The types of distress, their locations, and remedial action, scheduled or performed, shall be documented. The minimum information to be recorded is:

- inspection date
- location
- distress types
- maintenance scheduled and performed

For drive-by inspections the date of inspection and maintenance shall be recorded.

## INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

An airport sponsor may use any form of record keeping it deems appropriate, so long as the information and records produced by the pavement survey can be retrieved to provide a report to the FAA if required.

## REFERENCE

Refer to AC 150/5380-6 for specific guidelines and procedures for maintaining airport pavements and establishing an effective maintenance program. Specific types of distress, their probable causes, inspection guidelines, and recommended methods of repair are presented. Also AC 150/5380-7 and ASTM D 5340 can be used for references.

**Note:** The second item sets forth the three year detailed inspection as found in the Pavement Condition Index (PCI). The Montana Aeronautics Division currently produces a PCI index for all non-certificated NPIAS airports throughout the state every three years. This service is carried out by the Aeronautics division as a service to Montana airports without additional cost to those airports as part of an update to the Montana State Aviation System Plan. If you would like additional information about pavement maintenance programs, contact the division.

# Big Sky Alive '95

The *Big Sky Alive '95* airshow benefitted the Museum of Mountain Flying. In addition, an annual Smokejumpers reunion and a Johnson Flying Service reunion were held.

Delmar Benjamin in his Gee Bee performed, spending much of his time upside down and on his side. The Gee Bee was described by famed pilot Jimmy Doolittle as the most dangerous airplane he'd ever flown.

The popular Ford Tri-Motor, a mainstay of Johnson Flying Service's fleet returned from McMinnville, Oregon, and Denny Lynch flew in from Billings with his B-26 air tanker that was used in the movie "Always."

Also entertaining were the U.S. Marine Corps Harrier "jump jet," that flies at more than 700 mph, stops, bows to the crowd, then takes off vertically.

Also on hand were a P-3 Orion, a U.S. Navy subchaser, a Pitts S-2B and other military aircraft.

A special pyrotechnics display was conducted at twilight, building enthusiasm for the show.



*The Gee Bee Super Sportster and Pitts S-2B added to the excitement during "Big Sky Alive '95."*





# Schafer Meadows

## Thank You

I want to thank you for the plaque installed at the Schafer Meadows Pilot's Campground in Herb's memory. He loved Schafer Meadows and flew in as early as possible each spring to start the season. He missed only one annual July Fly-in (1994)—a very difficult decision for him to make.

Gail enjoyed her weekend with all of the pilots and their families and it made me happy to have our family represented. I am sure Herb was there too, in spirit.

Our family is so proud of the honors that have been given Herb—aviation was his love. Thank you from all of us.

Phyllis Sammons  
and family

*Mike Ferguson and Bob Lipscomb are pictured with Gail Sammons, daughter of the late Herb Sammons who passed away earlier in the year. The Schafer Meadows Campground was dedicated to Herb in his honor for his contributions for establishing and maintaining the campground. A plaque was installed on the information board at the campground.*



*Volunteers worked performing a variety of duties and projects. At left: Peg Lipscomb and Cheryl Bradt secured fencing along the north side of the airport.*



*The "wheelbarrow" crew worked diligently, digging dirt, transporting it and dumping it onto the path that was recreated from the campground entrance to the new handicapped outhouse constructed at last year's work session.*



*The major project involved total rebuilding of a picnic table. Bill Kautz, Helena, Ryan Hanson, Denver, Bram Tilroe, Edmonton, and Cam McBain of Calgary, together with many other helpers saw this job to completion.*

*These gals were the spreaders of the dirt. Left: Keri Ferguson, center: Brenda Spivey, right: Jean DeVivo.*



*This work session along with many other events throughout the year see support from our Canadian counterparts. This camaraderie and friendship is treasured.*

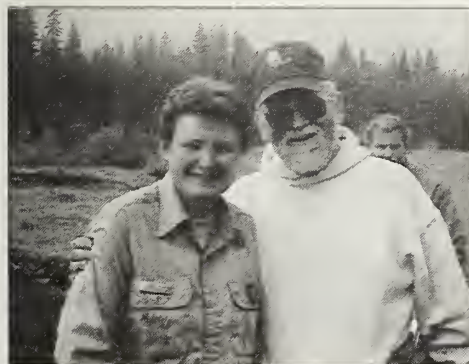




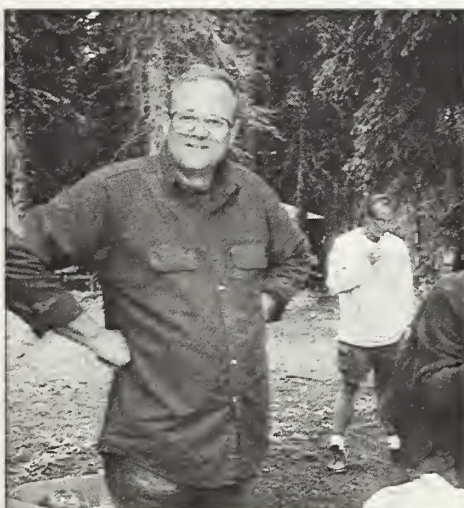
# Work Session



*Jim Griel of the Aeronautics Division hauls tools from the ranger station to the campground. This was the 21st year that members of the Montana Pilots Association and other volunteers gathered at this grass airstrip surrounded by forested mountains and low hills and close to the banks of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River.*



*Jennie Graham, lead wilderness ranger at the Schafer work station, and Bob Lipscomb, president, Montana Pilots Association (MPA), work together through their organizations and the Aeronautics Division to continue these ongoing efforts to maintain the lone wilderness airstrip within the 1.5 million acres that make up the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wilderness complex.*



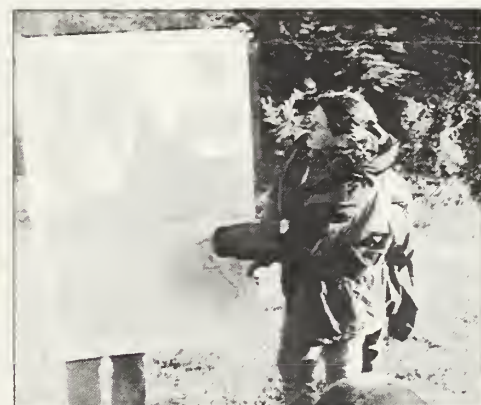
*Thanks for dinner Loren! As always, Loren Smith of Great Falls provided a memorable dinner for all volunteers and the USFS crew Saturday evening—deep-fried turkey, and pitchfork fondue style strip steak.*



*These enthusiastic volunteers were the runway "rock picker uppers!" Before moving on to their next assigned task, cutting down trees and removing deadfall from the approach to the airport, they were treated to cookies and juice at the ranger station.*



*There's nothing finer than a great home-cooked meal while in such a gorgeous area—"the last, best place," as described by Bob Lipscomb.*



*Above: Carol Eckert, district ranger for the Spotted Bear area, which includes Schafer Meadows, shared the history of the wilderness area. The airstrip, built in 1933, was allowed to remain when Congress approved the legislation in 1978 creating the Great Bear Wilderness. The airstrip was grandfathered into the wilderness area.*

*At left: Norm McPhee of Trout Creek gave a very informative and interesting presentation Saturday evening on flying in Alaska and the wilderness.*



# Maintenance Fatality

(Reprinted with permission from  
NATA Government Affairs  
Maintenance Operations News)

We reprint this FAA Alert with the deepest sympathy to family and friends.

(1) An aircraft maintenance technician was performing a fuel value modification which required defueling and fuel tank entry. It was necessary to open the external access panel and then the internal tank fuel valve access plate. The technician chose to use an electric (cordless) screw gun that was no explosion proof to remove the access plates. While removing the screws that secure the internal access plate, the dc motor in the screw gun ignited the fuel vapors inside the tank. This caused an explosion that destroyed the aircraft wing and cost the technician his life.

(2) There can be no solace in relating stories such as this, and we implore all those who may have the opportunity to work on or near aircraft to make caution and safety the number one priority. The lessons of this event are self evident and do not require further elaboration.

(3) It is recommended that all maintenance personnel inspect their flashlights, and other electric devices, to insure they are approved for use in a flammable environment. It is recommended that all repair facilities develop a training program to educate their personnel concerning aircraft safety and the hazards which may be encountered. ✈

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## CAP News

The Civil Air Patrol, (CAP) the official all volunteer civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force, has established a new toll free, 24-hour 800 number for people interested in joining CAP and who want to find a local squadron or who want information about establishing a new squadron in their area. Call 1-800-FLY-2338, and leave your name, mailing address and telephone number, with a brief explanation of what information is desired and it will be mailed to you.

The CAP has established two new aviation scholarships available for young Montanans. The first is to help any young woman in the U.S. pursuing a college education in an aviation curriculum. Write to the ICAS Foundation, Jan Jones Memorial Scholarship, 1931 Horton Road, Suite 5, Jackson, MI 49203. The second scholarship is available only to CAP cadets assigned to the Beartooth Composite Squadron in Billings and is intended to help a cadet attend the new Cadet Flight Training Encampment established by the CAP, EAA, volunteer USAF pilots and the Fox Valley Technical College. The first scholarship will be presented in March-April 1996 for the summer 1996 encampment. ✈

**August 1995**



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